



Cessford Castle from Wooden Hill.



Still Waters, The Teviot at Kalemouth.

Produced by Crailing, Eckford & Nisbet Community Council.

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CRAILING, ECKFORD & NISBET COMMUNITY COUNCIL

JUBILEE PATH

Talk not to me of brighter lands
Beyond the stormy sea,
Their streams may run with golden sands
But what are they to me.
I care na' for the gems they boast,
Though true may be their tale,
Give me the heather flower that blooms
In bonnie Teviotdale.

Bonnie Teviotdale John Halliday

A circular walk through the heart of Teviotdale, linking the three villages of Crailing, Eckford and Nisbet.

Passing through an area rich in history, plants and wildlife, the walk includes some glorious views.

Just over 12.5 Miles (20 Km) long with a total ascent of just under 900 feet (270m).



Parts of the route are on the St Cuthbert's Way and the Borders Abbeys Way and the way marking signs will have these indicators on them. However, in addition, the Crailing, Eckford and Nisbet Paths way marker will appear on significant indicator posts.

Although the whole walk is circular, it is possible to walk parts of it. It divides easily into three stages and this is how it is laid out in this booklet.

The route description in this booklet starts in Eckford and runs clockwise.

It is equally attractive going the other way and it works just as well with other starting points.

Most of the walk is on established paths and farm tracks and is well surfaced. However, in wet weather, it can be muddy in places and walking shoes or boots are strongly recommended.

There are spaces for car parking along the route but you are requested to park considerately to allow others free movement and not to block any farm gates.

This is prime agricultural country and there will be stock in the fields adjacent to the path and game in the woods. If taking a dog, please keep it under close control and on a lead when close to stock or game.

Please observe the Scottish Outdoor Access Code while on the walk. In summary, this states

Please exercise your access rights responsibly:

Take responsibility for your actions

Respect people's privacy

Help land managers and others to work safely

Care for your environment

Keep your dog under control

Visit www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

On the route there are two opportunities for a break for tea, coffee and something to eat during opening hours. These are:

The Caddy Mann Restaurant at Mounthooly Tel 01835 850787

The Teviot Game Fare Smokery at Kalemouth Tel 01835 850253

You may wish to telephone in advance to confirm opening times.

There is a regular Bus Service along the A698 which links Jedfoot, Eckford and Kalemouth. Bus times are available by phoning Traveline Scotland Tel 0871 200 2233 or via the website www.travelinescotland.com

THE AREA

The first peoples came to this area when the climate improved after the last ice age some 12,000 years ago. Initially they came only in the warmer summer months to hunt. It is most likely that they arrived here by boat having worked their way up the North Sea coast then into the Tweed/Teviot basin. This has long been an agricultural area and it appears from archaeological data that people had settled here at least 5,000 years ago and traces of burial cairns and cist burials have been found near all three villages.

The three villages, Eckford, Crailing and Nisbet have always been guite small, initially no more than a cluster of houses surrounding the landowner's tower with a church and a grain mill nearby. In the eighteenth century, after the agricultural revolution, they became estate villages and included craftsmen, shops and alehouses. In the nineteenth century, schools and post offices were added. The population of the parishes has declined steadily since peaking in the middle of the nineteenth century and the villages are now almost totally residential with few amenities. The village schools are closed and only Crailing Kirk remains open. There are no shops, post offices or pubs. However, there are public halls in Eckford and Crailing which are the hub of village life and these ancient villages remain a great place to stay.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Wildlife abounds throughout the route. As well as rabbits and hares, foxes can be seen in the wooded areas. Badgers and otters, though not so easily seen, live widely in the area. There is a healthy population of hedgerow birds and look out for, amongst others, woodpeckers, sparrow hawks and buzzards. Kingfishers can be seen along the Teviot and ospreys are occasional visitors.

Though this is predominantly arable land, wild flowers are common beside the paths. In spring, snowdrops, celandine, primroses and bluebells carpet the ground and the may blossom on hawthorn hedges is widespread. In summer, vetch, dog rose, red and white campion, stitchwort, speedwell, bedstraws and umbelliferae are common. In season, the forager can find plentiful quantities of wild garlic, brambles, crab apples, gooseberries and both the flowers and the berries of the elder tree.



Hawthorn blossom.

THE WALK

ECKFORD TO JEDFOOT

Distance 6.5 Miles (10.5 Km)

Height gained 850 feet (260m)



Eckford Loaning, looking towards the village.

Three moderate climbs with descents to Wooden Burn, Oxnam Water and Jed Water.

Parking is at the Village Hall or on the main street.

The village of Eckford sits on a mound of high ground above the River Teviot and it takes its name from a crossing point on the river known as the oak ford. In early times oak forests covered much of this area. The village has an ancient history with archaeological evidence of early settlers from the Bronze Age.

The crossroads, in the middle of the village, is the starting point of the walk.

Looking south, the house on the right is called Tower Cottage. This is so named because it is on the site of a fifteenth century Peel Tower – the home of the local landowners. The tower was destroyed in 1523 and again in 1545 during English raids, when vast tracts of the Borders were laid waste. Note also the 'bumpin' stane' at the corner of the house. These stones were



Frost on the Loaning.

placed at sharp corners to protect buildings from cart wheels if a horse misjudged the corner. At the top corner of the next house down is a 'loupin' on stane'. This was a set of steps to make it easier to mount a horse. Both of these stones date from the early nineteenth century.

The attractive red sandstone houses in the centre of the village were originally built in the late nineteenth century as estate workers' cottages. The Eckford estate has belonged to the Scott family of the Dukes of Buccleuch since the late 1300s.

To start the walk, look for the indicator post and head off from the crossroads in a southerly direction.

The route is known as The Loaning. A clue to its age can be found in how wide it is – much more than just a farm track. In medieval times Eckford villagers moved their stock to the grazing on Wooden Hill along The Loaning. However, it forms part of a much longer route from the north to the Cheviot Hills. Its origins probably lie in the Bronze Age and it would be used as a drove road and trade route for much of this time. It is recorded that it was used by the monks from Melrose Abbey as their route to their sheep farms in the Kale Valley.

Keep on this track for half a mile (1km) as The Loaning runs southeast then east. Look out for a signpost indicating a right turn to ascend Wooden Hill.

This is a steep climb but very worthwhile.

The woods along the top of the hill are among the earliest plantations in the Borders. The First Statistical Account from the 1790s records that the hill had already been planted with trees.

Do not enter the woods, instead follow the track to the right at the top of the field.

Walking along the front of the wood, the views looking north are very impressive.

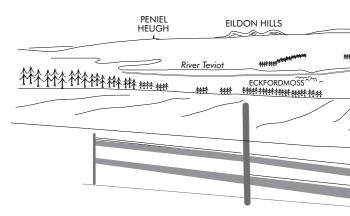
Follow the track, climbing steadily, until you come to a stile and signpost indicating that the path now enters the wood.

It is worth pausing at the stile before entering the wood to appreciate the view fully.



Snow on Cheviot from Wooden Hill.





THE VIEW FROM WOODEN HILL LOOKING NORTH

Looking from left to right. On the far left the mound of Minto Crags can just be seen over the treetops. The hills in the far distance are behind Galashiels and stretch to the Moorfoots. Closer are the hills behind Nisbet dominated by Peniel Heugh, topped by Wellington's Pillar, a monument to the victory at Waterloo erected by the Marguess of Lothian and his tenants in 1824. Moving to the right the distinctive three peaks of the Eildon Hills can be seen followed by the Black Hill of Earlston. Moving further right, the eagle-eyed will spot Smailholm Tower (perhaps the most famous of the Border Peel Towers) on Sandyknowe Crags commanding a great view over the local countryside. On a clear day it is just possible to see the windfarm on Soutra Hill just to the left of the tower, some thirty miles away, one of a number of windfarms in the area. The fertile farmlands around Kelso are easy to see though the town is hidden in the valley.

Moving into Berwickshire, the folly of Hume Castle can be seen on its hilltop framed by the twin peaks of Dirrington Great and Little Law, just outside Duns, with the Lammermuir Hills forming the background. On a clear day at least three windfarms are visible in this area.

Winding through the centre of this wonderful scene is the River Teviot on its journey to join the River Tweed at Kelso. It gives the area its Anglian name – the Teviot Valley - or, more appropriately, Teviotdale. HISTORIAN REPORT STATES AND STOWER STATES AND STATE

The village of Eckford lies directly below and it is easy to appreciate from here that it sits on relatively high ground. The valley bottom narrows and creates a bottleneck as the River Teviot passes Eckford. The flat land to the west of the village – great arable land today – was a marshy swamp before it was drained during the agricultural revolution and is still liable to flood in very wet weather – an impressive sight from this viewpoint. The buildings visible in the foreground start with Wester Wooden farm on the left (though the main buildings are hidden by trees), Eckford Moss, Eckford Hall, Ormiston, Eckford Kirk, Old Ormiston, Mosstower Farm, Grahamslaw Farm, Bowmont Forest and to the far right Caverton Hillhead Farm. Many of these will feature later in the walk.

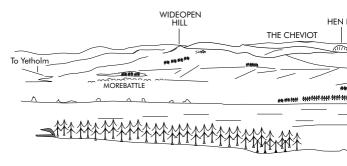
If the view to the north was special, many would argue that the view south from Wooden Hill is even better.

Cross the stile and enter the woods. After a short distance an indicator post will point to a right turn. Instead carry straight on for a further 50m.

A quite stunning view will open up in front of you.



Flooding between Nisbet and Eckford, December 2015.



THE VIEW FROM WOODEN HILL LOOKING SOUTH

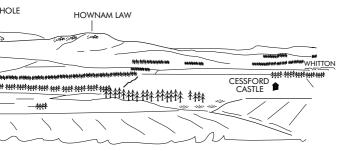
In the distance the Cheviot Hills mark the border between Scotland and England and, in reasonable weather, the great pudding bowl shape of Cheviot is easily identified to the south-east. The gouge on its otherwise rounded face is the Hen Hole, a glacial ravine through which flows the College Water and a favourite place for walkers and climbers. Further east, the hills forming the ridge behind Yetholm mark the route of the Pennine Way.

The village lying in the flat land to the south-east is Morebattle - in old English the farm settlement beside the lake or mere. From this viewpoint it is easy to appreciate the flat land that once formed the lake. This would have severely restricted communication in this area and would make The Loaning track an even more important route.

In the middle distance, right of centre (though not always easy to see) are the ruins of Cessford Castle, the home of the Ker family, Wardens of the Middle March in the reiving times. The relative isolation of this castle is easier to understand when we remember that the valley bottom was a marsh.

To the left of the castle, the hill is Hownam Law and if you look very carefully you can just make out the rings of the iron-age hill fort which was built on its top. Further to the west can be seen the farms of Whitton and Marchcleugh and the hills on the skyline mark the Carter Bar.

It is worth taking a little time on the walk to savour this magnificent view which sums up so much of the Borderland.



Retrace your steps to the way marker. The path now moves off through the woods across the top of Wooden Hill. After a short walk, an indicator post points to a left turn and the path emerges on the south side of the wood and turns sharp right. Follow this track for half a mile (1km) as it moves past the end of the wood.

There are some glorious views. Off to your right, topped by a telecoms mast, the summit of Rubers Law is prominent behind Jedburgh.

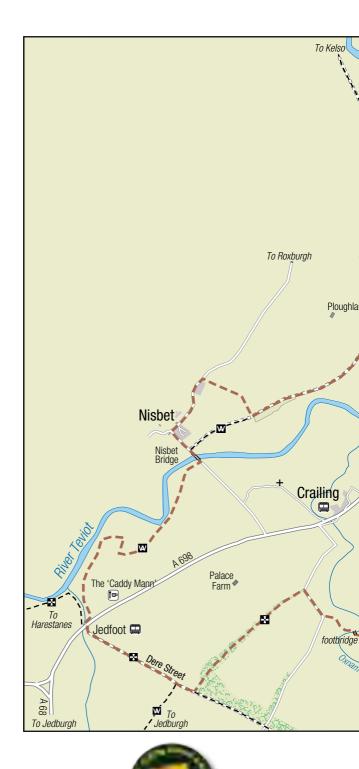
Where the track turns sharply right, follow the signpost into another plantation, Fox Covert. Follow the track and the posts through to the lower edge of the wood before turning right to join the St Cuthbert's Way.

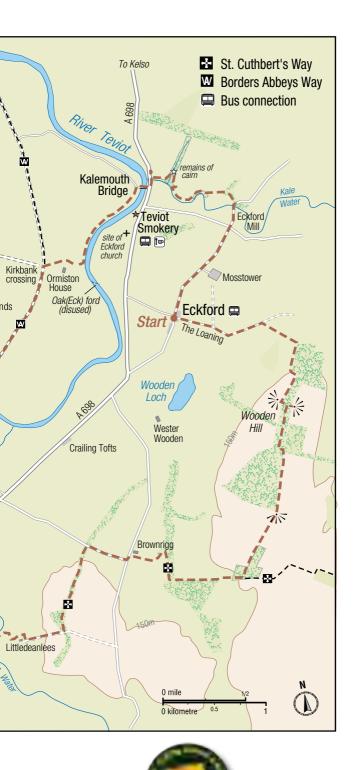
This runs from Melrose to Holy Island. Indicator posts for this stage will be marked with the St Cuthbert's Way logo.



Kale Valley and Cheviot from Wooden Hill.







After a gentle descent through some mature woodland, the path crosses the Wooden Burn and moves out of the parish of Eckford and into the parish of Crailing. After a very short climb to the edge of the wood the small settlement of Brownrigg can be seen.

The building on the right hand side was formerly the grain mill for the area and a close look in the field to the left will show the remains of the mill pond and lade. Looked at from this point it appears that the lade is flowing uphill, however, despite the evidence of your eyes, this is an illusion.

After a short walk on a surfaced road, the path enters another woodland plantation and at the top of this joins the road down to Littledeanlees.

This was formerly a small farm on the Marquess of Lothian's Estate. It could not have been an easy place to access in bad winter weather.

Past Littledeanlees the path moves through an open field (look out for livestock) and drops down to a bridge across the Oxnam Water.

This is a beautiful, peaceful spot.



The road down to Littledeanlees with Teviotdale behind.

Cross the bridge and re-join the public highway, going downhill towards the village of Crailing. After a short distance on the road, look for a signpost on the left where the route again enters woodland.

If you wish to visit Crailing village, a short walk of half a mile (0.8km) down the road will take you there. Like Eckford, the village of Crailing has an ancient history. Its name comes from the Old Welsh meaning the slope by the River Crai. Though most of the village is modern, the imposing Georgian mansion, Crailing House, built in 1803, dominates the site of the earlier castle and village together with the site of an ancient church and burial ground. Originally this land belonged to the Cranstoun family though it is now mostly part of Lothian Estates. The remains of the Crailing Merkat Cross can be seen at the entrance to the village and each year the Jethart Callant on his visit to the village drinks a toast from a ceremonial quaich at the cross.

Back on the walk, the path winds its way through the woodland behind Palace House and Palace Farm.

It is claimed that this was the site of the palace of the Bishops of Glasgow – Jedburgh was in early times part of their diocese. However, archaeologists have investigated what they think may be the site of the Bishop's Palace near Ancrum. Two palaces are very unlikely. Locals call the Crailing Palace the Palis. This may give a clue to the original derivation of the name – a building surrounded by a wooden fence or palisade, in modern terms a paling fence. The local dialect may provide the more accurate clue to the name.

After a pleasant walk through the wood, the path turns right and makes its way downhill.

You are now walking on a Roman road, Dere Street, a military route that ran between York and Edinburgh. Having come through the Cheviot Hills the road then made its way towards the Eildon Hills and the Roman fort of Trimontium.

At the bottom of the hill the path comes to the banks of the Jed Water, the end of the first stage of the walk.

There are now some choices – all of them pleasant!

Walk 400 yards / 350metres eastwards along the A698 to enjoy some refreshment at the Caddy Mann Restaurant.

Take a bus back to Eckford.

Take a detour. Cross the Jedwater at Jedfoot Bridge and keep following the signs for the St Cuthbert's Way. Follow the route round Jerdonfield Parks and cross the suspension bridge into the policies of Monteviot House. Follow St Cuthbert's Way from the suspension bridge to bring you to Harestanes Countryside Visitor Centre, 2.4 miles (4km) or the Woodside Walled Garden, 2 miles (3.3km) from here. Refreshments are available at both centres and there are ample spaces for car parking.

It is also possible to follow the path from here to the monument at the top of Peniel Heugh 2.9 miles (4.6km) away – the highest spot in our community at 770 feet (237m). This will involve a climb of 600 feet (182m) from the River. The views from here are as magnificent as those from Wooden Hill.

Stay on the same side of the River Jed and start the second section of our walk.



Peniel Heugh from Dere Street.

JEDFOOT TO KALEMOUTH

Distance 4.3 Miles (7 Km)

Height gained 30 feet (10m)

A fairly level walk along the banks of the River Teviot and along an old Railway line.

The route now follows the Borders Abbeys Way. After crossing the A698 (take great care as this is a fast stretch of road) join the track of the old Jedburgh railway.

This short line joined the railway from Berwick to St Boswells at Roxburgh and connected Jedburgh to the rail network. It was opened in 1856 and was used for both passengers and freight. It closed to passengers in 1948 but remained in operation for freight purposes. In 1956, following the closure of the North British Rayon Factory in Jedburgh - causing huge unemployment in the town – the railway could no longer be justified and it closed in 1964.

The track, much loved by dog walkers, provides a pleasant stroll along a route bordered by hawthorn and dog rose – presumably the original hedges along the railway line.

Follow the Borders Abbeys Way signposted route, initially on the old railway track bed, before turning right on to a path alongside a raised embankment, then left down a track to the riverside.

The stone piers of the old railway bridge are clearly visible on the left.

The walk along the river provides some lovely views and it is tempting to stay beside it. This is quite possible down to Nisbet Bridge. However, for a slightly shorter route, where the path forks, take the route away from the river, alongside another embankment, before crossing a stile and head for Nisbet Bridge.

The embankments were built as flood defences to protect valuable agricultural land. However, in severe weather, despite the embankments, these fields do flood and create a huge loch between here and Eckford – a spectacular sight.



River Teviot with Peniel Heugh in the distance, Nisbet.

The path crosses the river at Nisbet Bridge.

This is a mid-nineteenth century iron and steel structure. The sign for the Borders Abbeys Way indicates a right turn shortly after crossing the bridge to re-join the railway line. The buildings nearby are the remains of Nisbet Station and the bump in the road still marks where the railway crossed it.

Our route takes a short detour by going straight ahead, then turning off right at the signpost to enter Nisbet village.

This village too has a long and distinguished history. The name Nisbet – which gives rise to a fairly common surname – comes from the Middle English nesebit meaning the nose bit and, just upriver, there is a very clear nose shaped promontory which may give rise to the name. Its first feudal owner was Ranulph de Sules, a Norman who accompanied King David I on his return from England in 1124. He built a tower near the present village but it was completely demolished in the early part of the nineteenth century. Most of Nisbet is now part of Lothian Estates.

In the centre of the village are the ruins of a very old church and burial ground. The Nisbet parish was merged with Crailing in 1606 and the church in Nisbet fell into disuse. A ferry was established on the Teviot to allow the Nisbet people to attend the new church, built below the village of Crailing (it will be clearly visible further along the walk). The first bridge across the Teviot to join the two villages was built in the mid nineteenth century.

The older houses in the village are arranged around an attractive village green. Most of these houses were Lothian Estate cottages for farmworkers at East and West Nisbet. The central part of the village is now a conservation area.

Walk through the village and past the buildings of East Nisbet farm. At the fingerpost, a track leads off to the right up and over the hill to re-join the old railway line and the Borders Abbeys Way. Turn left at the junction.

At the top of the hill there are some great views over Teviotdale towards the Cheviot Hills.

The route, on the track bed of the railway, goes through arable farmland and follows the course of the River Teviot, keeping well above the floodplain. The fields here, once reclaimed from swampland, proved to be very productive. In the 1780s, not long after the conclusion of the American War of Independence, tobacco was successfully grown in these fields and it was hoped that it could become a commercial crop. However, changes in government taxation put an end to this interesting experiment.

Prior to the railway being built – and there were plans for a railway from Berwick upriver from the early 1800s – there was a plan for a canal to be built from Berwick to Ancrum. Its purpose was to provide a trade route for goods coming into and going out of the central borders. As an engineering task it would not have been unachievable since the total gain in height over the 30 miles was less than 250 feet (70m).

The tree lined walk along the old railway line is very quiet and peaceful with some lovely views, particularly to the south.

The route continues along the railway for nearly 2 miles (3 km) before turning right at Kirkbank Crossing.

On the right, nearly hidden in the trees, is the cottage for the person responsible for the level crossing. This could not have been the busiest job in the world, with relatively few trains and even fewer people crossing. However, just along the line lies the site of Kirkbank Station. This was an important centre for the movement of livestock for the whole of the Kale Valley and thousands of sheep and cattle were moved from here each year.

The walk now leaves the Borders Abbeys Way and makes its way down to the River Teviot. Follow the Crailing, Eckford and Nisbet Paths waymarkers for the Jubilee Path.

The path passes the substantial house at Ormiston with its stable block to the left and, where the road reaches the river and turns left, the ruins of the walled garden can be seen. Just upstream is the site of the oak ford, the crossing point which gave Eckford village and parish its name.

For the next half mile or so (1km) the path makes its way along a beautiful stretch of quiet road beside the River Teviot.



Old railway track, Nisbet.

The Border Poet, Will H Ogilvie, captured the spirit of the river with these lines –

So with only laughter laden,
Never caught, yet often called,
Teviot speeds, a blue eyed maiden,
Chainless, curbless, unenthralled:
Mad and glad with mountain water,
Gathered where the pink heath grows
She, the border's hoyden daughter,
Wayward through the lowland goes.

Looking across the river, Eckford Kirk sits proudly on a hilltop. Situated on what is clearly a very ancient – possibly pre-Christian – religious site, the present church dates from 1665. Sadly, the church is now closed but the graveyard is open and is well worth a visit, not only to see the jougs – neck irons used as a punishment for sinners – hanging from the outer wall of the church but also for the watchtower in the graveyard where, in the early nineteenth century, relatives would stand guard over the graves of their loved ones to ensure that they were not plundered by bodysnatchers.

Just downriver is Kirkbank House, now the Teviot Game Fare Smokery. This was once the home of Lady John Scott, one of the Buccleuch family, who wrote the lyrics to the famous Scots song, Annie Laurie.

The final part of this stage involves a re-crossing of the River Teviot. This is done at Kalemouth Bridge.

This is a very early suspension bridge (1825) designed by Captain Samuel Brown, the same person who built the famous Union Suspension Bridge at Horncliffe near Berwick. The views from the bridge are memorable and at the southern end we can see the toll house where the fees for crossing the bridge were collected. On the masonry on the right hand parapet of the Eckford side of the bridge is a mark indicating the level of the river during the 1948 floods. However, it is reported that in the floods of December 2015, the river level was even higher!

This is the end of the second stage of our walk. Choices are:

Turn right and walk along the A698 for 100 yards / 90 metres and visit The Teviot Game Fare Smokery for refreshments.

Catch a bus back to Jedfoot.

Continue with the third stage of our walk.

KALEMOUTH TO ECKFORD

Distance 1.7 Miles (2.75 Km)

Height gained 33 feet (10m)

A delightful walk along the banks of the Kale Water with a final stretch along a quiet tarmac road to Eckford.

This is by far the shortest section of the walk but is memorable nonetheless.

Moving up from Kalemouth Bridge, the path crosses the A698 (take great care here as, again, traffic moves at high speed on this section of road) and turns left and crosses the Kale Water.

The modern bridge (also rather confusingly known as Kalemouth Bridge) was opened in 1974. The site of the original bridge lies a little upstream and the foundations are only just visible. To construct the new bridge, it was necessary to demolish Kalemouth House which was situated almost immediately below it. Part of the wall of the walled garden is still visible below the bridge.

After a short walk along this busy road, the path turns off to the right and descends, through a field rich in wildflowers, to a spot below the new bridge. A short spur to the path, signposted as a viewpoint, is well worth taking since this leads to the spot where the Kale joins the Teviot.

Take a seat here to admire the view of the rivers and the Kalemouth Suspension Bridge. Just behind are the remains of an orchard which formed part of the policies of Kalemouth House.



The Teviot at Kalemouth.

Back on the main path, move round the edge of the field before entering the woodland at Briton Sike.

This is a remarkably steep little gorge and a footbridge makes the crossing much easier. This high point, at the top of a small cliff, overlooking the Kale was clearly of some significance in earlier times and it is interesting to speculate if the name of the area reflects the early settlers who used this spot. In the 1930s, after a slight rock fall, a cairn was found here with 14 bronze axe heads dating from the late 8th century BC. Most of these are now in the possession of the National Museums of Scotland. When the cairn was excavated in 1932 two burial cists were found.

The cairn today is hardly visible though the site is easy to identify.



The cairn during excavations in 1932.



Wild Garlic and Briton Slke Cairn.

The path winds its way through the woods before skirting a field alongside the Kale.

The Kale Water rises in the Cheviot Hills and makes its way through the Kale Valley before entering what was once a large swampy lake at Morebattle. In very early times this drained away to the east near Yetholm but during the last ice age the Kale broke through at Marlefield and carved its own route to join the Teviot. In so doing, the river gouged out quite a significant gorge through the soft sandstone creating cliffs; an example can be seen on the other side of the river. Further upstream at Grahamslaw, caves in the cliffs show signs of earlier human habitation.

This part of the Kale Valley was a strong base of the covenanting movement in the seventeenth century and conventicles (open air services) were regularly held in hidden areas beside the banks of the river.

Once round the field, the path again enters an area of mature trees and climbs above the river.

This area is a haven for wildlife and wildflowers.

After a walk of half a mile the path joins a surfaced road just beside another bridge over the Kale Water.

The house on your left is Eckford Mill and was a water powered mill for the area, latterly a sawmill.

The path now follows the surfaced road and crosses over the B6401.

Just at the crossroads, in the field to your left, aerial photography has shown the site of an early henge monument, a religious site of some importance; nothing remains visible today.

The road from here to Eckford is fairly quiet but care should be taken as some vehicles using it travel quite quickly.

The farm on the left is called Mosstower. This was the site of another Peel Tower. Located in the middle of a swamp or moss, it could only be approached by a raised causeway. This made it one of the strongest towers in the Borders. Nevertheless, it was destroyed at least three times during English raids in the sixteenth century, as were the fortified buildings at Ormiston, Wooden, Grahamslaw and Eckford. The level of destruction in this area must have been considerable.

A short walk from here brings you back to the crossroads at Eckford, the finish of this section and the end of the circular path.



Mosstower Farm.

